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ABSTRACT

This guide is designed to assist librarians and administrators both in assessing the strengths and weaknesses of their public library service to youth and in making immediate and long range plans to reach desired goals. The standards provide a basis for understanding the scope and purpose of youth services. A philosophical statement on service precedes guidelines on materials collections, services, and facilities for both children and young adults. Specifics on collection size, reference services, programming, and working with community agencies are included. Combined sections for both children and young adult specialties cover staffing and management, budget preparation, goals and objectives, professional development, and involvement with associations. The final section focuses on the role of the specialist, emphasizing that library service to youth is the cornerstone of the public library profession. Appendices include statements on competencies for serving youth, restricted access to library materials, and free access to libraries for minors.
 (Author/THC)

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**STANDARDS FOR YOUTH SERVICES
IN PUBLIC LIBRARIES
OF NEW YORK STATE**

Prepared by the Task Force on Standards for Youth Services,
Youth Services Section, New York Library Association.

Adopted by the Council, New York Library Association
July, 1984

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PREFACE

The Task Force on Standards for Youth Services in Public Libraries of New York State was selected to represent state, system and individual libraries as well as the geographic spectrum of New York.

The members of the committee are past-presidents of the Youth Services Section of NYLA and an appointed representative of the State Education Department.

Two years were spent in writing the document. During that time all twenty-two library systems were given an opportunity to provide input. A committee of noted library leaders representing the various segments of the New York State library community reviewed the standards and made recommendations to the task force.

Many factors have contributed to a need for evolving standards and guidelines for public library youth services. In particular, the librarians providing service to children and young people expressed a need for these standards.

Cognizance has been taken of the diversity in size and structure of public libraries and systems throughout the state. The fact that each system has established its program in accord with local needs and interests and that member libraries retain their individuality and autonomy will determine the means by which these standards will be implemented. Although the means may differ, the end result – quality service to youth – should be realized in all communities from the largest city to the smallest village.

The standards should be a guide by which librarians and administrators may assess the strengths and weaknesses of their youth services and make immediate and long range plans to reach desired goals. The standards should give trustees, local governing bodies, and the general public a better understanding of the scope and purpose of youth services.

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PHILOSOPHY OF SERVICE

Every young person, from infancy through the teen years, should have available an accessible, free public library which provides appropriate materials, resources, and reader guidance to meet informational and recreational needs. Library service for youth, a vital and integral part of public library service, contributes to individual growth and development. Services that are available for adult users should be provided for children and young adults.

Librarians serving young people must be advocates for children and young adults. Their concerns should include an awareness of forces in today's world which affect the quality of life of young people.

The role of youth services in public libraries is changing. In developing a plan of service for collection development and programing, librarians must be responsive to the needs of children, young people, and families that constitute their public. Cooperation with other local agencies serving youth and close working relationships with schools are essential for the public library to maintain community awareness.

Librarians working with young people must be aggressive and extend services outside the library to those who are disadvantaged, have special needs, and are institutionalized.

Providing excellent library service for youth builds a clientele of young people today and a foundation of public support for libraries in the future. Providing access to knowledge broadens the minds of young people, stimulates their imaginations, and expands their horizons. These positive and enriching experiences found in the library environs will have an impact on individuals, their society, and their world.

INTRODUCTION TO CHILDREN'S SERVICES

Service to children has an integral part in the public library's role to provide materials and services to meet the informational and recreational needs of the community. Children's services focus on individuals and encourage them to use these services voluntarily and independently. Service to children also strengthens the work of organizations, schools, and adults concerned with children.

The need for public library service to children has long been recognized. As administrators and trustees evaluate the library's role in the community and make changes to meet contemporary needs, so must children's services be evaluated and changed.

The foundations from which children's services are created are carefully selected materials, specially trained personnel, and suitable facilities; upon these standards a strong service to children is built.

STANDARDS FOR CHILDREN'S SERVICES

A. Materials Collections

CHILDREN'S MATERIALS COLLECTIONS SHOULD PRESERVE THE BEST OF THE PAST, OFFER THE BEST OF THE CURRENT, AND REFLECT CHANGES IN CHILDREN'S INTERESTS AS WELL AS CHANGES IN SOCIETY.

A balanced, varied, and comprehensive representation of subjects and formats must be developed.

These materials should be organized and displayed in ways suited to use by children.

ALL LIBRARIES AND LIBRARY SYSTEMS SHOULD HAVE A WRITTEN POLICY, REGULARLY REVISED, GOVERNING THE SELECTION AND MAINTENANCE OF MATERIALS COLLECTIONS, BOTH PRINT AND NONPRINT.

It should state clearly that the general library selection policy applies equally to children's materials as part of the total library collection. If there are sections of policy related specifically to children's materials, they should be included in the library's general selection policy.

THE LIBRARIAN RESPONSIBLE FOR THE SELECTION OF CHILDREN'S MATERIALS SHOULD BE FAMILIAR WITH THE RANGE OF CHILDREN'S LITERATURE, THE NEEDS AND INTERESTS OF CHILDREN, AND THE COMMUNITY AND ITS PARTICULAR NEEDS.

The Print Collection

The selector must continuously read children's books in order to evaluate new titles and compare them with quality literature of the past and present.

The selector should be aware of current reviewing media and should make full use of library system resources, review collections, and workshops.

The selection of materials must reflect local factors such as the ethnic and religious composition of the community, special populations (gifted, disabled, institutionalized), educational needs, and the interests of parents.

Each library should have magazines appropriate for children.

Clippings, pictures, art reproductions, etc. on subjects of interest should be collected and made accessible.

Where space for collection and budget permit, duplicate copies of good books should be acquired rather than items of marginal quality or interest.

In addition to hardcover books, paperback books should also be purchased both for reasons of economy and for their strong appeal to children.

The Nonprint Collection

Nonprint materials offer an expanded range of resources for learning and recreation. Nonprint materials include audiovisual formats and realia.

Audiovisual materials include recordings, cassettes, computer software, video tapes, filmstrips, and other items, both recreational and informational.

Realia includes puppets, toys, games, and other multi-dimensional learning objects.

As technology develops, the public library should provide innovative equipment and materials which children can use to learn in new ways.

The children's librarian should keep informed about new technologies and audiovisual materials.

The staff member in charge of children's services, particularly in small or rural public libraries, should make full use of expertise available at the library system in building this collection.

Specialized materials for use by disabled children or their parents should be available.

Appropriate equipment for using audiovisual materials should be made available for use in the library, and where possible, for loan. Listening and viewing facilities should be available on an equitable basis to all age levels. Where possible, training sessions should be available to teach children to operate computers as well as audiovisual equipment.

Library staffs should take full advantage of all types of audiovisual materials available for children through the library system and state agencies.

Collection Size

THE CHILDREN'S COLLECTION SHOULD BE LARGE ENOUGH TO FILL MOST REQUESTS FOR INFORMATION AND RECREATIONAL MATERIALS.

Approximately 30% of the library materials budget should be spent for children's materials. Of that amount 10-25% should be spent on audiovisual materials for children. If the library has a separate audiovisual materials budget, one-third of that budget should be spent for the children's department. The budget for print materials should be divided equally between fiction and nonfiction purchases. These amounts will vary depending on the percentage of children in the total population served and the percentage of children's materials in the total collection.

Maintenance

IN ORDER TO MAINTAIN A COLLECTION WHICH IS UP-TO-DATE, IN GOOD CONDITION, AND ORGANIZED FOR EASY ACCESS, IT SHOULD BE EVALUATED AND WEEDED ANNUALLY.

A collection of current, clean, appealing materials invites children to read and use them.

Of the total children's materials budget, 25% should be spent for replacements and/or strengthening the basic collection. Since titles can go out of print quickly, this percentage may vary.

Where size of collection or budget permit, duplicate copies of good books should be considered, rather than single copies of ephemeral materials.

Maintaining and weeding the audiovisual collection is especially important.

B. Services

SERVICES FOR CHILDREN SHOULD BE PROVIDED IN EVERY LIBRARY REGARDLESS OF SIZE.

Books, supplemented by nonprint materials, are the basis for providing library service to children throughout all stages of development, from infancy through junior high school age.

A LIBRARY CARD PROVIDES CHILDREN WITH BORROWING PRIVILEGES.

All children by the age of six should have their own library cards. Registering for a library card is an important achievement for a young child. The responsibilities that accompany the privilege of a library card should be emphasized.

CHILDREN SHOULD HAVE ACCESS TO THE FULL RANGE OF LIBRARY MATERIALS.

All patrons should have equal borrowing privileges without arbitrary age restrictions. Children should not be restricted to materials in the children's area. Borrowing materials through interlibrary loan should be extended to children, following the procedures already established for adults.

Service to the Community

WORKING WITH COMMUNITY AGENCIES CAN HELP THE CHILDREN'S LIBRARIAN PROVIDE BETTER SERVICE TO CHILDREN.

The public library is a vital part of the network of services in its community. As such, it must work with individuals, community organizations, and other libraries.

It is important for the children's librarian to initiate and maintain contacts with community institutions, agencies, and organizations involved with children. The public library can be the center for information about these agencies and organizations and they should receive regularly updated information about the public library and its materials and services for children.

THE CHILDREN'S LIBRARIAN SHOULD ESTABLISH COOPERATIVE RELATIONSHIPS WITH OTHER LIBRARIES IN THE COMMUNITY.

The children's librarian must be aware of other libraries in the community that provide service to children. The most obvious are the school media centers and their staffs with whom a cooperative relationship should be established. Coordinated collection development and/or cooperative purchase of materials could be explored. Regular school class visits to the public library should be arranged whenever possible to make both children and teachers aware of the resources of the public library. The children's librarian should visit assembly programs or classrooms to introduce the library's resources and services. The children's librarian needs to be aware of and in contact with academic and specialized libraries and to utilize their resources as relevant.

COMMUNITY NEEDS SHOULD PROVIDE THE BASIS FOR PLANNING LIBRARY SERVICE TO CHILDREN.

Information about the community can help librarians develop goals and objectives, identify unserved areas, and establish the library needs of the community. Public libraries should conduct surveys to learn about their communities. In preparing the survey, the children's librarian should determine those questions that will identify existing services, their effectiveness, and areas for new directions. Professional and concerned adults can be valuable sources of information for this planning process. Such a survey provides the library with information about the community; it is also an excellent way to inform the community about the library and its services.

The first step in planning library service to children is to make contact with the children themselves. The librarian should make careful observations and respond to requests in order to develop collections, programs, and services to meet children's needs. Contact with parents is also essential to encourage them to have their children make full use of library services and to stress the public library's potential for providing meaningful experiences and materials that will develop and enrich the lives of their children.

Parents, professionals, and concerned adults in the community can be valuable resources for maintaining quality library service to children. The children's librarian might convene an informal advisory committee to aid in planning and evaluating the library's services to children.

Reference Services

THE INFORMATIONAL NEEDS OF CHILDREN SHOULD BE FILLED TO THE FULL EXTENT OF THE LIBRARY'S CAPACITY.

All of the library's services should be available to children, including but not limited to: interlibrary loan, computers, information and referral, telephone reference, and nonprint information such as filmstrips, cassettes, films, video tapes, pamphlets, and other formats.

The library should have the resources to fill most children's requests and requests for juvenile materials by adults.

Requests for materials that cannot be filled locally should be referred through the interlibrary loan network.

There should be no arbitrary limitations on the type of question answered for a young person.

Reference service should be available to children during all of the hours the library is open.

Good reference service to children includes familiarity with the school curriculum.

READER GUIDANCE SHOULD BE AVAILABLE TO HELP CHILDREN USE THE COLLECTION.

The librarian should be able to guide children to relevant sources in book and nonbook formats.

The librarian should be aware of the current interests of children.

Reading guidance by trained staff should be available to children during all of the hours the library is open.

CHILDREN SHOULD HAVE ACCESS TO LIBRARY MATERIALS THROUGH A COMPREHENSIVE CATALOG.

Full subject headings using terminology familiar to young people should be provided for juvenile materials, both fiction and nonfiction.

If the juvenile catalog is combined with the adult catalog, there should be easy physical access to the card catalog, microform readers, or terminals.

All union catalogs and data bases developed by public libraries on a regional basis should include juvenile materials.

CHILDREN SHOULD HAVE ACCESS TO SPECIALIZED REFERENCE TOOLS.

A medium or large public library should have a separate, up-to-date reference section for children which includes general tools, such as encyclopedias and dictionaries, and specialized materials such as indexes to fairy tales or children's poetry. Small public libraries should have an up-to-date reference collection suitable for use by all ages and should utilize the library system and/or the central reference library for specialized information.

To supplement their research, children should have access to a variety of adult and juvenile periodicals.

REFERENCE SERVICES TO CHILDREN SHOULD BE EVALUATED.

A reference log should be maintained to provide statistics on collection use and to pinpoint its weaknesses and strengths. Since a growing number of adults concerned with children or interested in their literature use the reference services of the children's department, data on adult use should also be compiled. Questionnaires can be used periodically to supplement other data collecting procedures.

Programing

EVERY LIBRARY, REGARDLESS OF SIZE, SHOULD OFFER PROGRAMS FOR THE CHILDREN OF THE COMMUNITY IN ADDITION TO THOSE OFFERED FOR SCHOOL CLASS VISITS.

Programing is a vital activity that serves the cultural, recreational, and informational needs of the community, publicizes the library, promotes its use, and increases circulation. Programs should be planned for children of all ages, including those with special needs, and for adults such as parents, teachers, and/or community workers who are involved with children. Programs are not limited to those conducted inside the library.

ALL PROGRAMS SHOULD BE DESIGNED TO ATTRACT CHILDREN TO THE LIBRARY AND ITS MATERIALS.

Programs should stimulate a child's interest in books, information, and reading. A variety of programs should be offered including toddler - preschool-picture book story hours, storytelling for older children, summer reading programs, film programs, and programs involving technology, such as computers and video tapes or discs.

In planning programs, the librarian responsible for children's services should consider the following: 1) the library's overall philosophy and objectives, 2) quality of presentation, 3) content appropriate to the audience.

and 4) other programs available for children in the community.

The children's librarian may occasionally use volunteers who have special skills. Volunteers presenting book-related programs in libraries should be trained and supervised by the librarian. Training may be available through the system's children's services consultant.

Where there is a full-time children's librarian, there should be a minimum of four programs a month, in addition to school classes. Where there is a part-time children's librarian or where a librarian of another specialty is responsible for services to children, there should be at least one program a month.

Because programming is a basic library activity, it is essential that library time be scheduled for planning, preparation, and publicity. Necessary funds must also be budgeted.

Reports of programs, including content, attendance statistics, and evaluation, should be kept to determine the impact of the program on the audience, to help in preparing budgets, and to aid in future planning.

Public Relations

THE ENVIRONMENT OF THE LIBRARY SHOULD BE INVITING TO ALL AGES.

A welcome atmosphere should greet each person using the library. Creating this environment will require a commitment to youth services on the part of each staff member and may necessitate in-house training sessions.

Appealing displays, exhibits, and booklists should introduce different portions of the library collection to children. Displays and exhibits should be changed frequently and booklists should be kept current.

LIBRARY SERVICES AND ACTIVITIES SHOULD BE PROMOTED THROUGHOUT THE COMMUNITY.

Activities and services should be publicized through in-house posters and flyers and mass media resources such as newspapers, community newsletters, radio, and television. Services such as interlibrary loan should also be publicized, for children may not realize that books can be borrowed for them from another library.

Children's programs should be widely publicized. Publicity should include the appropriate age level and whether registration is required. Although attendance may be limited by the library for some programs such as preschool or crafts, all programs should be open to everyone in the community.

Staff should introduce the library's resources, services, and programs for children by visiting local schools on a regular basis. Other youth-related community institutions and organizations should also receive this information frequently. These agencies are natural distribution points for library flyers, posters, and promotional materials.

The public library is a primary resource for children's materials and this role should be widely publicized to create maximum use by the community.

C. Facilities for Children

EVERY LIBRARY SHOULD HAVE A CLEARLY IDENTIFIED AND DESIGNATED AREA FOR CHILDREN'S SERVICES. IT SHOULD BE AN INTEGRAL PART OF THE ENTIRE LIBRARY.

It should be attractive, accessible, comfortable, secure, and functional. It should have an inviting and welcoming atmosphere for children from toddlers to preteens.

It must be accessible to and logically connected with the adult, young adult, and reference areas, their collections and their catalogs.

Wheelchair access and safe restrooms are essential.

The children's area should be open all the hours the library is open.

When planning for construction or remodeling, the children's librarian must ensure the building has a children's area that is appropriate and inviting.

FURNITURE, SHELVING, AND EQUIPMENT SHOULD BE APPROPRIATELY SIZED.

Tables and chairs should meet the needs of various ages.

Provision should be made so that small children can reach public service desks (checkout and return) and upper shelves.

Children's books, which come in various sizes and shapes, require a variety of shelf sizes. Standard specifications for shelving suggest a depth of 12 inches for picture books and recordings and of 9 inches for standard fiction and nonfiction. A stack height of 42 inches for picture books and of 60 inches for standard size books is desirable.

There should be a variety of display facilities, such as paperback and magazine racks, record bins, bulletin boards, and lighted exhibit cases.

The collection should be labeled with attractive signs that are consistent, clear, simple in style, and located with children in mind.

Ample seating, audiovisual capabilities, and an adequate supply of protected electrical outlets are essential. Carpeting, good acoustics, sound-proofing, and temperature control are also desirable, where funds permit.

EACH LIBRARY MUST HAVE SPACE FOR PROGRAMS.

Space can be created by moving furniture or by using a multi-purpose meeting room. Chairs of appropriate size should be provided for children.

INTRODUCTION TO YOUNG ADULT WORK

Young adult is a term used by the library profession to designate adolescents. The exact age span for young adults has been debated because adolescence is a process as well as a period of life.

Young adults are people who no longer see themselves as children but who have not yet achieved adulthood. Some young people enter adolescence before reaching a chronological teen age, while others remain adolescents well into their twenties. For the purposes of this publication, individuals from the seventh grade on are classified as young adults.

Young adults are a large, dynamic, and vital part of the public library's clientele. They deserve the best service that can be offered if an effective transition is to be made between the children's department and the adult department so they may benefit from all that the library offers. This link will help young adults become mature and responsible citizens, committed to supporting quality library service.

The public library is responsible for providing staff specially trained in selecting materials for young adults and for making those materials accessible. For those young adults who do not or cannot visit the library, an aggressive policy of outreach must be pursued in agencies, schools, and institutions through programs and publicity which reach teenagers. Young people are so important to today's and tomorrow's worlds, that the greatest effort to put them in touch with a better life should be made. The library's role in developing the individual's self-fulfillment is infinite.

The role of the young adult specialist is to bring the library into the life of the young adult in such a way that the library becomes a lifelong habit. The standards set forth in this publication will define that role and help young adult specialists fulfill it.

STANDARDS FOR YOUNG ADULT SERVICES

A. The Young Adult Section

A YOUNG ADULT AREA SHOULD NOT SEGREGATE TEENAGERS FROM THE REST OF THE LIBRARY, BUT SHOULD BE A FOCAL POINT THAT MAKES THEM AWARE OF MATERIALS AVAILABLE TO THEM AND ENHANCES THEIR COMFORT IN THE LIBRARY.

It is both practically and psychologically important to house the young adult collection within or adjacent to the adult area. There should be no attempt to keep young adults confined to their specific department. The young adult area is the transition from the children's department to the entire library.

The space allotted to teenagers, whether consisting of a few stacks or a few shelves, should be inviting, informal, colorful, and attractive. The young adult area should be clearly marked and visible to young people as they enter the building.

The young adult section should be placed near a staffed area to allow for assistance and supervision without making the section appear to be under observation.

Comfortable chairs, study tables, and listening areas should be provided for young adult users.

Facilities for lighted exhibit cases, recording machines, projectors, microcomputers, bulletin board space, etc. should be considered when the area for teenagers is designated.

B. Young Adult Materials Collection

THE YOUNG ADULT COLLECTION SHOULD HAVE A DESIGNATED 10% OF THE TOTAL LIBRARY'S PRINT BUDGET.

This percentage may vary depending upon the young adult population in the community and the usage patterns of the library's total collection.

This recommended percentage is small since a goal of young adult service is to stimulate young people to use the entire library. The adult and reference collections should incorporate and reflect materials needed by, suitable for, and of interest to young adults.

Of the young adult budget, 25-50% should be spent on paperback books. The compact and convenient size of paperbacks has great appeal to teenagers.

NONPRINT MATERIALS SHOULD BE PURCHASED FOR TEENAGERS.

To reflect the high interest of young adults in nonprint formats, one-third of the total nonprint budget should be spent on recordings, audio tapes, video tapes and discs, and computer programs.

Any library that has a collection of 16mm films should designate at least 15% of the film budget to purchase films reflecting young adult interest. System film collections should also reflect the needs of young adults.

C. Selection of Materials for the Young Adult Collections

THE LIBRARIAN HAS THE RESPONSIBILITY TO INTRODUCE YOUNG PEOPLE TO A BROAD RANGE OF MATERIALS.

Developing a materials collection that meets the special needs and interests of youth is central to young adult services.

Reading quality materials should be encouraged. However, if a book is not considered "great literature" but is written in a clear style with correct facts, it should be purchased. Materials of an ephemeral nature that relate to the contemporary concerns of youth are an essential part of the collection.

The teenage years are years of great curiosity. Books that satisfy that curiosity should be purchased and made available, even if the subject matter is in opposition to the librarian's personal beliefs.

For young adults who have reading problems but sophisticated interests, high interest-low vocabulary materials should be carefully selected and shelved with the other young adult materials.

The public librarian should be aware of the types of materials that students request for research assignments and purchase them accordingly.

Magazines and periodicals should be chosen for young adults by applying the same selection criteria as for books.

A YOUNG ADULT COLLECTION SHOULD ASSIST TEENAGERS IN MAKING THE TRANSITION FROM THE CHILDREN'S DEPARTMENT TO MORE INDEPENDENT USE OF THE ENTIRE LIBRARY.

The young adult collection should be constantly reevaluated.

Specific titles in each collection will vary according to the interest and needs of young people in the community.

Outdated materials should be removed and new titles should be added frequently to the young adult collection.

Materials from the entire library should be evaluated for their appeal to young adults and brought to their attention, either by temporarily placing them in the young adult collection or by creating special displays.

D. Reference Services

YOUNG ADULTS ARE THE MOST FREQUENT USERS OF REFERENCE SERVICES IN MANY PUBLIC LIBRARIES.

These services include traditional reference information generated by school assignments as well as personal needs and interests of young adults.

Request for career, consumer, hobby, and crisis information should be anticipated and encouraged.

Young adults should be assured of the same courteous, sympathetic, and confidential treatment that is extended to adult patrons. Personal requests should not be reported to parents, teachers, friends, or authorities. The Freedom of Information Law¹ applies to all individuals regardless of age.

All assignments are of serious concern to the student and should be treated with respect.

Young adults need guidance in organizing materials, making effective use of reference information, and choosing resources appropriate to the problem at hand. Librarians must be prepared to teach research skills as required. Self-reliance for the young adult is a goal, but it is important to demonstrate that librarians are willing to help the novice researcher.

¹ New York State, Public Officers Law, Article 6, Sections 85-89

YOUNG ADULTS MUST HAVE ACCESS TO THE ENTIRE RANGE AND COLLECTION OF LIBRARY SERVICES.

Microforms, audiovisual materials and equipment, interlibrary loan service, reserve systems, and library research departments should be available to young adults.

Where data base searches are available, young adults should be able to request this service.

If a young adult has exhausted a library's collection and needs more information, it is the librarian's responsibility to explain interlibrary loan and other available resources.

ADVISORY SERVICES SHOULD BE PROVIDED TO ALL TEENAGERS.

Job Information Centers (JIC) should extend their complete services to young people.

When possible a specially trained librarian should be available to work on a one-to-one basis with young people to provide information on leisure activities, careers and jobs, high-school equivalency programs, college selection, and financial aid. A computerized guidance system is desirable to supplement the information provided by the librarian.

E. Programing

EACH PUBLIC LIBRARY, REGARDLESS OF SIZE, SHOULD PROVIDE PROGRAMING FOR YOUNG ADULTS.

Programing should be as varied as the interests of the young adults and should reflect the needs of the community. Programs should focus on current young adult concerns and enthusiasms, but should avoid duplicating activities that are readily available elsewhere. A program should be informational and recreational and may be held inside or outside the library.

Ideally, a library should sponsor or cosponsor at least one young adult program per month. Where there is no young adult librarian, the library should provide a minimum of two programs a year.

Young people who frequent the library can help plan programs. Ideas for programs can come from the young adults, community agencies, other specialists, staff members, professional publications, newspapers, and multimedia events.

F. Work with Community Agencies

THE LOCAL PUBLIC LIBRARY SHOULD COOPERATE WITH LOCAL SCHOOLS IN ORDER TO MEET THE INFORMATIONAL NEEDS OF YOUNG ADULTS.

The public library collection should meet recreational and informational needs beyond the realm of the school library.

The school and the public library should explore sponsoring cooperative programs and establishing an interlibrary loan structure.

The public librarian should invite school classes to visit the library and the librarian should visit classes in the school.

THE LIBRARY SHOULD BE AWARE OF THE SOCIAL SERVICE AND RECREATIONAL AGENCIES IN ITS SERVICE AREA AND WORK MORE CLOSELY WITH THEM.

Surveying the community and interviewing other agencies that serve youth are excellent ways to identify young adults and their interests.

Outreach to other agencies that serve youth is an important way of serving young people who are not reached by traditional methods. The library should have a current community file which lists all local agencies.

LIBRARIANS SHOULD HAVE CONTINUING CONTACT WITH LOCAL GOVERNMENT, LOCAL AGENCIES, AND THE COMMUNITY.

These contacts can help young people meet their informational needs and provide a source of grants for special young adult programs and projects.

THE LIBRARY SHOULD HAVE A STRONG PUBLIC RELATIONS PROGRAM DIRECTED TO ALL SCHOOLS AND AGENCIES THAT SERVE YOUTH.

G. Special Services for Young Adults

Literacy

YOUNG ADULTS WHO HAVE READING PROBLEMS OR WHO SPEAK ENGLISH AS A SECOND LANGUAGE (ESL) SHOULD HAVE ACCESS TO LITERACY OR ESL PROGRAMS.

The library should be aware of young adult programs in its area including those that are school-related, those for dropouts, or new immigrants, etc.

If agencies do not provide these programs, the library, either in cooperation with other agencies or on its own, should promote a literacy and/or ESL program. The library should provide materials that are necessary and relevant to this program.

Youth in Institutions

EACH LIBRARY/REGION/SYSTEM SHOULD HAVE AN OUTREACH PROGRAM TO SERVE YOUTH IN INSTITUTIONS.

Institutions include hospitals for the chronically ill and disabled, group homes, reform schools, and prisons.

Services may include deposit collections, programs, special booklists, delivery of films to be shown to residents, media workshops, and specialized advisory services.

Services to Out-Of-School Youth

THE LIBRARY SHOULD BE THE PRIME SOURCE OF FILLING THE INFORMATIONAL NEEDS OF SCHOOL DROPOUTS.

High school equivalency materials, exam books, and necessary self-improvement materials should be provided.

Regional/system libraries, even those with Job Information Centers, should provide workshops on resume writing, filling out job applications, and job interviewing techniques.

Technological Equipment

YOUNG ADULTS SHOULD HAVE EQUAL ACCESS TO ALL TECHNOLOGICAL AND AUDIOVISUAL EQUIPMENT.

Young adults should have equal access to communication and reprographic systems and computers. Young adults may be encouraged to train others in the use of information technology and in writing programs.

Young adults should be allowed access to all data bases available in their library system.

STAFFING

A. Administrative Staff

TO RENDER EFFECTIVE PUBLIC LIBRARY SERVICE, ADEQUATE AND COMPETENT PERSONNEL MUST BE PROVIDED AT STATE, SYSTEM, AND LOCAL LEVELS.

AT THE LOCAL LEVEL:

EVERY LIBRARY SHOULD HAVE A PERSON IN CHARGE OF CHILDREN'S SERVICES WHO IS KNOWLEDGEABLE ABOUT AND RESPONSIVE TO THE NEEDS OF CHILDREN.

Wherever more than one full-time professional librarian is employed within the library unit, one should be trained for and designated to work with children.

EVERY LIBRARY SHOULD HAVE A PERSON IN CHARGE OF YOUNG ADULT SERVICES WHO IS KNOWLEDGEABLE ABOUT AND RESPONSIVE TO THE NEEDS OF YOUNG ADULTS.

In a library that does not have a full-time or part-time young adult librarian, a designated staff member under the guidance of the library system should be responsible for maintaining the young adult collection and for providing the services that young adults require.

In a library that has two full-time professional librarians, and where there is no system young adult consultant, the adult services librarian should be familiar with young adult reference needs and also take responsibility for seeking out adult books suitable for young adult reading. The children's librarian should have the responsibility for the materials that were written specifically for teenagers.

In a library that has three full-time professional librarians, one of these should be a young adult librarian responsible for materials and services.

RESPONSIBILITIES OF YOUTH SERVICES LIBRARIANS INCLUDE COLLECTION DEVELOPMENT, PROGRAMING, AND OUTREACH.

While the skills and responsibilities of the children's librarian and the young adult librarian will vary, primary responsibilities include:

- planning and developing a service program in conjunction with overall library policies
- selecting, evaluating, and discarding materials in the youth collections
- utilizing those collections and the fuller resources of the local library, library system, and state to meet the informational and recreational needs of young people and those of adults concerned with young people
- planning and presenting library programs for young people for a variety of age levels in a variety of formats
- establishing sound working relationships with other community institutions and agencies concerned with young people

Competencies for librarians serving youth are appended.

AT THE SYSTEM LEVEL:

A FULL-TIME CONSULTANT FOR CHILDREN'S SERVICES AND A FULL-TIME CONSULTANT FOR YOUNG ADULT SERVICES SHOULD BE ON THE STAFF OF EACH PUBLIC LIBRARY SYSTEM.

These librarians must have:

1. all the qualifications for a youth specialist in a public library
2. a Master's Degree in Library Science from an ALA-accredited library school
3. recognized leadership ability
4. demonstrated expertise as an administrator or as a specialist in the appropriate youth department for at least four years.

RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE CHILDREN'S SERVICES CONSULTANT INCLUDE COLLECTION EVALUATION AND DEVELOPMENT, TRAINING AND CONTINUING EDUCATION, AND SYSTEM-WIDE OUTREACH PROJECTS.

The Children's Services Consultant is responsible for creating a structure that recommends and evaluates materials for purchase by the system member libraries. When appropriate, this consultant will build and develop collections for their use.

The Children's Services Consultant should plan and conduct training and continuing education in formal and informal situations on all aspects of library service to children.

System-wide programs and public relations efforts geared towards children, such as summer reading programs or Children's Book Week, are the responsibility of the Children's Services Consultant.

The consultant is also responsible for outreach efforts conducted on a regional basis with organizations or institutions concerned with children.

RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE YOUNG ADULT SERVICES CONSULTANT INCLUDE COLLECTION EVALUATION AND DEVELOPMENT, TRAINING AND CONTINUING EDUCATION, AND SYSTEM-WIDE OUTREACH PROJECTS.

A consultant with expertise in service to adolescents should be available to help and guide librarians at the local level. This consultant should be familiar with the vast range of technological information, materials, and interests related to young adult work.

The Young Adult Services Consultant should be the speciality trainer for all new young adult staff and should guide and help libraries lacking a specialist.

The consultant is responsible for young adult book selection and evaluation and works with system staff to designate materials of particular interest and relevance to teenagers. These materials include but are not limited to adult books for young adults and audiovisual materials.

THE CHILDREN'S SERVICES CONSULTANT AND THE YOUNG ADULT SERVICES CONSULTANT ARE REGIONAL ADVOCATES FOR YOUTH AND REPRESENT THE LIBRARY SYSTEM IN STATEWIDE PROGRAMS ON CONCERNS RELATED TO AGE-LEVEL SPECIALITIES.

AT THE STATE LEVEL:

A FULL-TIME CHILDREN'S SERVICES CONSULTANT AND A FULL-TIME YOUNG ADULT SERVICES CONSULTANT TRAINED AND EXPERIENCED IN MEETING THE NEEDS OF YOUNG PEOPLE ARE ESSENTIAL AT THE STATE LEVEL FOR COORDINATING ACTIVITIES AND INFORMATION RELEVANT TO THE AGE-LEVEL SPECIALITIES.

These consultants should have at least five years of experience as speciality supervisors in library systems or major city systems in the appropriate age-level division and must demonstrate leadership ability.

RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE CHILDREN'S SERVICES CONSULTANT AND YOUNG ADULT SERVICES CONSULTANT INCLUDE GATHERING AND DISSEMINATING INFORMATION, CONTINUING EDUCATION, DEVELOPING SERVICES, AND COORDINATING ACTIVITIES RELATIVE TO THE SPECIALITY ON A STATEWIDE BASIS.

These consultants act as liaisons between the public libraries and the state and national organizations and institutions concerned with youth, including but not limited to the Bureau of School Library Media Programs and other units, committees, and task forces of the State Education Department.

The Children's Services Consultant and the Young Adult Services Consultant monitor statewide planning, legislation, and judicial decisions pertinent to their specialties.

The consultants serve as information specialists on library materials and services for young people for the State Education Department and assist age-level system specialists in planning and coordinating activities on a regional level.

B. Support Staff

THE CHILDREN'S LIBRARIAN AND THE YOUNG ADULT LIBRARIAN, OR PERSONS RESPONSIBLE FOR LIBRARY SERVICES TO THOSE AGE GROUPS, MUST HAVE AN ADEQUATE SUPPORT STAFF AND MUST BE FREED FROM CLERICAL DETAIL.

The support staff should be selected, trained, and evaluated by the staff in charge of youth services.

The nature and extent of service provided will determine whether age-level specialists require additional professional and clerical staff.

Professional personnel should be allowed time on the job to prepare and plan programs, to arrange displays, to select materials for the collections, and to visit other community agencies, institutions, and organizations serving young people. Paraprofessional staff, under the direction of the youth specialists, should also have planning and preparation time.

A VOLUNTEER SHOULD NEVER BE CONSIDERED A SUBSTITUTE FOR A PAID EMPLOYEE NOR MAY A VOLUNTEER RELIEVE THE PROFESSIONAL STAFF OF PROFESSIONAL RESPONSIBILITIES.

Through careful placement, training, and supervision by the person in charge of children's services or young adult services, volunteers may make possible services and programs which could not otherwise be provided.

C. Youth Services Staff

CHILDREN'S SERVICES AND YOUNG ADULT SERVICES ARE IMPORTANT, VIABLE COMPONENTS OF THE TOTAL LIBRARY SPECTRUM.

Youth librarians have the responsibility to keep staff informed of activities and materials for children and young adults as well as promoting understanding of the specific needs of these age levels.

Children's services specialists and young adult services specialists should participate in the overall administration of the library or library system they serve.

These age-level specialists should have equal opportunities for promotion and advancement with other librarians in public service.

Personnel employed in youth services should be encouraged to participate in professional activities and continuing education experiences. Release time and monetary support should be available.

THE CHILDREN'S SERVICE AREA AND THE YOUNG ADULT SERVICE AREA SHOULD BE OPEN AND STAFFED DURING ALL THE HOURS THE LIBRARY IS OPEN.

MANAGEMENT IN YOUTH SERVICES

A. Goals and Objectives

THE PHILOSOPHY OF LIBRARY SERVICE TO YOUTH IS MADE TANGIBLE BY A VARIETY OF GOALS AND OBJECTIVES. [definition and examples in brackets below]

Goals for youth programs and activities should be coordinated with overall library goals. Both should be matched to current community needs.

Budget allocations, established after analysis of staff time and costs, should support youth services goals and objectives.

GOALS AND OBJECTIVES PROVIDE THE YOUTH SPECIALIST WITH THE TOOLS FOR PLANNING, DIRECTION, AND EVALUATION.

After analysing community needs, reviewing overall library goals, and setting both long and short range goals and objectives, the youth services librarian sets priorities, thereby establishing the direction of community services.

Goals and objectives should be in printed form so that they can be communicated to others, e.g. library directors, trustees, and staff; set direction for the future; and provide a basis for the youth services specialist's accountability.

[**Goals** are general statements of mission or purpose that give substance to the philosophy governing all library activities.

Objectives are specific, measurable statements of outcomes to be accomplished for goals to be achieved.

Example:

Goal: To introduce poetry to young people

Objectives: 1. Conduct a series of workshops

Measurement: Number of workshops held
Attendance

2. Increase poetry collection

Measurements: Number of books and
recordings added

3. Set up an exhibit

B. Preparation and Use of Library and Other Reports

Reports communicate and document the achievement of goals and objectives, programs, and services to the library director, trustees, and staff. Reports should be kept for reference and for use in future planning.

THE LIBRARIANS SERVING YOUNG PEOPLE SHOULD SEE THAT ACCURATE, UP-TO-DATE RECORDS ARE MAINTAINED.

Records should include:

1. Expenditures for library materials and programs to assure that the budget allocation is met and not exceeded.
2. Collection size and records of acquisitions, discards, and losses. Collections may be broken down by format.
3. Circulation of materials to children and to young adults. (Sampling periods can be regularly scheduled to provide an approximation of age-level statistics.)

4. Separate registration figures for children and young adults. (Where registration is done centrally, sampling periods can be regularly scheduled to provide these age-level statistics.)
5. Use of reference materials by age-level to provide information on collection use and needs.
6. Records of program content and attendance.
7. Visits by the librarian to other agencies and by other agencies to the library for information and programs.

THE LIBRARIAN SERVING YOUTH SHOULD PREPARE MONTHLY STATISTICAL AND ANNUAL STATISTICAL AND NARRATIVE REPORTS.

These reports are essential to inform the director and others regularly about accomplishments, activities, problems, and statistical information. Anecdotal information should be included when appropriate.

Such reports are also useful records for youth librarians in self-evaluation and future planning.

SERVICE SHOULD BE CONTINUALLY EVALUATED THROUGH THE USE OF LIBRARY AND COMMUNITY REPORTS AND SURVEYS.

User and community surveys should be conducted regularly to identify needs and levels of satisfaction.

Available data from community plans and studies, such as census information, should be used in planning for the future.

C. Participation in Management

YOUTH SERVICES LIBRARIANS SHOULD PARTICIPATE IN THE OVERALL DECISION-MAKING PROCESS THAT GOVERNS THE LIBRARY AND ITS SERVICE.

In every library, regardless of size, youth services librarians should have input and involvement in the management of the library. If the library director does not encourage or ask for that participation, those librarians must generate it. Information through reports and direct communication will provide the support the director needs and will build the team climate that is desired.

To assure a place in the decision-making framework, youth services librarians should attain competence in library management. They must be knowledgeable in and comfortable with techniques of administration, including budgeting and finance, use of statistics, the governmental process, human relations in staff supervision and training, and public relations.

D. Budget

THE BUDGET DETERMINES THE DIRECTION OF EFFECTIVE LIBRARY SERVICE.

The budget process should involve all professional staff from inception to presentation to the governing body.

To justify their budget requests, youth librarians must consider: size of collection, circulation figures, percentage of children and young adults in the community, usage patterns, programing, and outreach.

Budget preparation provides the opportunity for staff to identify and assess needs.

E. Professional Development

OPPORTUNITIES FOR IN-SERVICE TRAINING AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT SHOULD BE PROVIDED BY EVERY LIBRARY.

Times should be given during working hours for attendance at conferences, workshops, institutes, and meetings at local, regional, and state levels and, when possible, at the national level. Meetings for selecting materials, evaluating media, and developing skills are of particular importance for youth librarians at the system level.

Youth services librarians should also have opportunities to attend continuing education activities that will not only increase their specialty skills but also their skills in supervision and management.

Promotions and advancement should be available to youth services staff within each library organization. These positions can be a combination of administration and specialty, promotion within the specialty, or to a managerial position outside the specialty.

F. Involvement with Library and Community Associations

THE LIBRARIANS RESPONSIBLE FOR YOUTH SERVICES SHOULD BELONG TO LOCAL, STATE, AND NATIONAL LIBRARY ASSOCIATIONS.

Involvement with association activities will help the youth services librarian keep up with developments in the field and will lead to an exchange of ideas with other librarians.

Provision should be made for youth services staff to participate in professional activities, attend meetings, conduct workshops, and serve on committees. Reimbursement for expenses such as registration, food, lodging, and transportation should come out of the library budget. Time spent in attending these meetings should be paid library time.

THE LIBRARIANS RESPONSIBLE FOR YOUTH SERVICES SHOULD ESTABLISH COMMUNICATION WITH COMMUNITY ASSOCIATIONS CONCERNED WITH YOUNG PEOPLE.

Those librarians should:

- Explore ways of reaching patrons through cooperation with community agencies or associations.
- Exchange information with community agencies and associations concerned with youth.
- Provide information about community services to parents and other adults working with children and young adults.
- Seek sources of grant money for special programs or projects.
- Belong to key associations to promote the library as an ally in providing service to the community's young people.

THE ROLE OF THE SPECIALIST

The role of the youth specialist is being challenged in various ways across the country. Some library systems have restructured their staff into generalists, other systems have eliminated age-level consultants, and some systems have done both.

Shortchanging library service to youth in any way will be detrimental to the survival and well-being of public libraries in the community and society.

Adult library patrons do not suddenly materialize at age 25; that base of users was cultivated by the children's and young adult librarians who reached out with programs and appealing materials to build that clientele.

Specialists enable the library patron to use the collection to its full potential because they have expertise in the field of child and adolescent development and a knowledge of specialized collections. It is the combination of these two abilities that enables the specially trained librarian to interpret library resources for young people. The specialist helps educate the public and gives confidence to the user.

The broad range of competence required for these specialists demands a commitment from library schools to provide the groundwork and training to work with young people in libraries.

It is incumbent upon children's and young adult librarians to maintain and foster their own sense of professionalism within the profession and to communicate the essential importance of their specialty as an integral part of the public library; it is also incumbent upon administrators and managers to support and acknowledge that active and strong youth services will strengthen invaluable the institution of the public library and make it a more effective instrument of public service. The key to continued support of public libraries lies in making library users out of young people.

The role of youth librarians is to bring ideas into the lives of young people. Through the power of the book, librarians can help them connect with their past, understand their present, and create their future.

Library service to youth is the cornerstone of the public library profession.

APPENDIX A

COMPETENCIES FOR LIBRARIANS SERVING YOUTH

Adapted with permission from a document approved by the Board of Directors of the American Library Association's Young Adult Services Division (YASD) in July, 1982.

The word "student" was replaced with the word "librarian" wherever it appeared and the young adult phraseology was revised to expand the concepts and applications to the entire spectrum of youth services, so that, for example, "the right of young adults" became "the right of young people."

The asterisk on Area I, #8 identifies it as an addition to the original text by the Standards Task Force of the New York Library Association's Youth Services Section.

AREA I: LEADERSHIP AND PROFESSIONALISM

The librarian will be able to:

1. Develop and demonstrate leadership skills in articulating a program of excellence for young people.
2. Exhibit planning and evaluating skills in the development of a comprehensive program for young people.
3. Develop and demonstrate a commitment to professionalism.
 - a. Adhere to the American Library Association Code of Ethics.
 - b. Demonstrate a non-judgmental attitude toward young people.
 - c. Preserve confidentiality interactions with young people.
4. Plan for personal and professional growth and career development through active participation in professional associations and continuing education.
5. Develop and demonstrate a strong commitment to the rights of youth to have access to information, consistent with the American Library Association's Library Bill of Rights.
6. Demonstrate an understanding of and a respect for diversity in cultural and ethnic values.
7. Encourage young people to become life-long library users by helping them to discover what libraries have to offer and how to use libraries.
- *8. Act as an advocate for library services to youth in the library, the community, the state, and the nation.

AREA II: KNOWLEDGE OF CLIENT GROUP

The librarian will be able to:

1. Apply factual and interpretative information on child and adolescent psychology, growth and development, sociology, and popular culture in planning for materials and services for young people.
2. Apply knowledge of the reading process and of types of reading problems in the development of the collection and program for young people.
3. Identify the special needs of discrete groups of young people and design and implement programs and build collections - appropriate to their needs.

AREA III: COMMUNICATION

The librarian will be able to:

1. Demonstrate effective interpersonal relations with young people, administrators, other professionals who work with young people, and the community by:
 - a. Using principles of group dynamics and group process.
 - b. Establishing regular channels of communication (both written and oral) with each group.
2. Apply principles of effective communication which reinforce positive behaviors in young people.

AREA IV: ADMINISTRATION

(A) Planning

The librarian will be able to:

1. Formulate goals, objectives, and methods of evaluation for a youth program based on determined needs.
 - a. Design and conduct a community analysis and needs assessment.
 - b. Apply research findings for the development and improvement of the youth services program.

- c. Design, conduct, and evaluate local action research for program improvement.
2. Design, implement, and evaluate an on-going public relations and report program directed toward young people, administrators, boards, staff, other agencies serving young people, and the community at large.
3. Identify and cooperate with other information agencies in networking arrangements to expand access to information for young people.
4. Develop, justify, administer, and evaluate a budget for the youth services program.
5. Develop physical facilities which contribute to the achievement of youth services program goals.

(B) Managing

The librarian will be able to:

1. Supervise and evaluate other staff members.
2. Design, implement, and evaluate an on-going program of staff development.
3. Develop policies and procedures for the efficient operation of all technical functions (including acquisition, processing, circulation, collection maintenance, equipment supervision, and scheduling of young people's programs).
4. Identify external sources of funding and other support and apply for those suitable for the youth services program.
5. Monitor legislation and judicial decisions pertinent to young people, especially those which affect youth rights, and disseminate this information.

AREA V: KNOWLEDGE OF MATERIALS

The librarian will be able to:

1. Formulate a selection policy for young people's materials, consistent with the parent institution's selection policy, with a systematic procedure for handling challenges.
2. Develop a materials collection for young people which includes all appropriate formats, using a broad range of selection sources.
3. Demonstrate a knowledge and appreciation of literature for young people.
4. Identify current reading, viewing, and listening interests of young people and incorporate these findings into collection development and programs.
5. Design and locally produce materials in a variety of formats to expand the collections.
6. Incorporate technological advances (e.g., computers, video) in the library program.

AREA VI: ACCESS TO INFORMATION

The librarian will be able to:

1. Organize collections to guarantee easy access to information.
2. Use current standard methods of cataloging and classification, and be aware of the newest technology.
3. Create an environment which attracts and invites young people to use the collection.
4. Develop special tools which provide access to information not readily available, e.g., community resources, special collections.
5. Devise and publicize pathfinders, book lists, displays, etc., which will ease access to collections and will motivate use.

AREA VII: SERVICES

The librarian will be able to:

1. Utilize a variety of techniques (e.g., booktalking, discussion) to encourage use of materials.
2. Provide a variety of information services (e.g., information referral, crisis intervention counseling, on-line data bases) to meet the diverse needs of young people.
3. Instruct young people in the basic information gathering and research skills needed for current and future use.
4. Encourage young people in the use of all types of materials for their personal growth and enjoyment.

5. Design, implement, and evaluate specific programs and activities (both in the library and in the community) for young people, based on their needs and interests.
6. Involve young adults, and children as appropriate, in planning and implementing services for their age group.

APPENDIX B

RESTRICTED ACCESS TO LIBRARY MATERIALS

An Interpretation of the LIBRARY BILL OF RIGHTS

Adopted February 2, 1973; amended July 1, 1983, by the ALA Council.

Restricting access of certain titles and classes of library materials is a practice common to many libraries in the United States. Collections of these materials are referred to by a variety of names such as "closed shelf," "locked case," "adults only," or "restricted shelf."

Three reasons generally advanced to justify restricted access are:

- (1) It provides a refuge for materials that belong in the collection but which may be considered "objectionable" by some library patrons;
- (2) It provides a means for controlling distribution of materials to those who are allegedly not "prepared" for such materials, or who have been labeled less responsible, because of experience, education, or age;
- (3) It provides a means to protect certain materials from theft and mutilation.

Restricted access to library materials is frequently in opposition to the principles of intellectual freedom. While the limitation differs from direct censorship activities, such as removal of library materials or refusal to purchase certain publications, it nonetheless constitutes censorship, albeit in a subtle form. Restricted access often violates the spirit of the LIBRARY BILL OF RIGHTS in the following ways:

- (1) It violates that portion of Article 2 which states that "...no library materials should be proscribed...because of partisan or doctrinal disapproval."

"Materials...proscribed" as used in Article 2 includes "suppressed" materials. Restricted access achieves *de facto* suppression of certain materials.

Even when a title is listed in the catalog with a reference to its restricted status, a barrier is placed between the patron and the publication. Because a majority of materials placed in restricted collections deal with controversial, unusual, or "sensitive" subjects, asking a librarian or circulation clerk for them may be embarrassing for patrons desiring the materials. Because restricted collections are often composed of materials which some library patrons consider "objectionable," the potential user is predisposed to thinking of the materials as "objectionable," and may be reluctant to ask for them. Although the barrier between the materials and the patron is psychological, it is nonetheless a limitation on access to information.

- (2) It violates Article 5, which states that, "A person's right to use a library should not be denied or abridged because of...age...."

Limiting access of certain materials only to adults abridges the use of the library for minors. Access to library materials is an integral part of the right to use a library. Such restrictions are generally instituted under the assumption that certain materials are "harmful" to minors, or in an effort to avoid controversy with adults who might think so.

Libraries and library boards who would restrict the availability of materials to minors because of actual or anticipated parental objection should bear in mind that they do not serve *in loco parentis*. The American Library Association holds that it is parents – and only parents – who may restrict their children – and only their children – from access to library materials and services. Parents who would rather their children not have access to certain materials should so advise their children.

When restricted access is implemented solely to protect materials from theft or mutilation, the practice may be legitimate. However, segregation of materials to protect them must be administered with extreme attention to the reason for restricting access. Too often only "controversial" materials are the subject of such segregation, indicating that factors other than theft and mutilation - including content - were the true considerations. When loss rates of items popular with young people are high, this cannot justify the labeling of all minors as irresponsible and the adoption of prejudiced restrictions on the right of minors to use library services and materials.

Selection policies, carefully developed to include principles of intellectual freedom and the LIBRARY BILL OF RIGHTS, should not be vitiated by administrative practices such as restricted access.

See also FREE ACCESS TO LIBRARIES FOR MINORS, adopted June 30, 1972, amended July 1, 1981, by the ALA Council

APPENDIX C

FREE ACCESS TO LIBRARIES FOR MINORS

An Interpretation of the LIBRARY BILL OF RIGHTS

Adopted June 30, 1972; amended July 1, 1981, by the ALA Council.

Some library procedures and practices effectively deny minors access to certain services and materials available to adults. Such procedures and practices are not in accord with the LIBRARY BILL OF RIGHTS and are opposed by the American Library Association.

Restrictions take a variety of forms, including, among others, restricted reading rooms for adult use only, library cards limiting circulation of some materials to adults only, closed collections for adult use only, collections limited to teacher use, or restricted according to a student's grade level, and interlibrary loan service for adult use only.

Article 5 of the LIBRARY BILL OF RIGHTS states that, "A person's right to use a library should not be denied or abridged because of origin, age, background, or views." All limitations on minors' access to library materials and services violate that Article. The "right to use a library" includes use of, and access to, all library materials and services. Thus, practices which allow adults to use some services and materials which are denied to minors abridge the use of libraries based on age.

Material selection decisions are often made and restrictions are often initiated under the assumption that certain materials may be "harmful" to minors, or in an effort to avoid controversy with parents. Libraries or library boards who would restrict the access of minors to materials and services because of actual or suspected parental objections should bear in mind that they do not serve *in loco parentis*. Varied levels of intellectual development among young people and differing family background and child-rearing philosophies are significant factors not accommodated by a uniform policy based upon age.

In today's world, children are exposed to adult life much earlier than in the past. They read materials and view a variety of media on the adult level at home and elsewhere. Current emphasis upon early childhood education has also increased opportunities for young people to learn and to have access to materials, and has decreased the validity of using chronological age as an index to the use of libraries. The period of time during which children are interested in reading materials specifically designed for them grows steadily shorter, and librarians must recognize and adjust to this change if they wish to serve young people effectively. Librarians have a responsibility to ensure that young people have access to a wide range of informational and recreational materials and services that reflects sufficient diversity to meet the young person's needs.

The American Library Association opposes libraries restricting access to library materials and services for minors and holds that it is the parents - and only parents - who may restrict their children - and only their children - from access to library materials and services. Parents who would rather their children did not have access to certain materials should so advise their children. The library and its staff are responsible for providing equal access to library materials and services for all library users.

The word "age" was incorporated into Article 5 of the LIBRARY BILL OF RIGHTS because young people are entitled to the same access to libraries and to the materials in libraries as are adults. Materials selection should not be diluted on that account.